

Imprimatur,

July 28.
1688.

*Hic Libellus cui Titulus, A
Discourse concerning the
Church, &c.*

Jo. Battely.

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A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
CHURCH

In these following PARTICULARS.

- I. Concerning the *Visibility of the true Church.*
- II. Concerning the *Church of Rome.*
- III. Concerning *Protestant Churches.*
- IV. An Answer to this Question; *Where was your Church before Luther?*

BY

The Right Reverend Father in GOD

ROBERT SANDERSON

Late *Lord Bishop of LINCOLN.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. B. for R. Taylor, MDCLXXXVIII.

1800

Containing the

CHURCH

In the following PARTICULARS

1. Concerning the
2. Name.

II. Concerning the Order of Service.

III. Concerning the Church's Discipline.

IV. Concerning the Church's Officers.

V. Concerning the Church's Property.

BY

The Right Reverend Father in GOD

ROBERT SAMPSON

late Bishop of Lincoln

LONDON

Printed by T. B. for J. W. and L. W.

THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

That the following Discourses are
Genuine and Authentick; and were
really writ by that excellent Pre-
late whose name they bear; can never be
doubted by the Learned and Judicious Reader.
For the Composures of that incomparable Pen
are so Close and Logical, and his Stile so Mas-

The PUBLISHER

culine and Convincing, as not easily to be imitated by any other Hand.

However to justify my Integrity herein (since posthumous Writings lye under Suspicion) I shall give this further Satisfaction; That about Twenty Years since, I received these Papers from the Hands of that well-known good Man Mr. Jo. Pullen of MAGDALEN-HALL, his Lordship's Domestic Chaplain. Who, upon my Desire, did communicate not only these, but several other Remains of the same venerable Name.

Amongst which, there is a Fragment of an Answer to Dr. Baylie's Challeng. Whether or no it was ever finished, I have no certain Conjecture. But if it were, and could be found, the Publishing of it at this Juncture would be Seasonable and Useful.

For

to the READER.

For though that Pamphlet is a Piece of as transparent Sophistry, as was ever called Demonstration; and though the Weakness and Inconsequence of it hath been sufficiently displayed; yet such is the Pleasure of some Men, that it hath been Printed and Re-printed with as much Assurance, as if not the least notice had been ever taken of it.

The same Remark is obvious concerning these following Tracts.

'Tis surprising to observe (after these things have been so clearly and fully stated) that we should ever and anon be thus pelted with that impertinent Question, Where was your Church before Luther? Our Venerable Author doth tell them where it was. And he doth it with such an Evidence and Strength of Reason, as is peculiar to Himself. For whereas
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The PUBLISHER, &c.

the Writings of other Men may indeed convince ; Those of Bishop Sanderſon do perfectly Silence.

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A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

VISIBILITY

OF THE

True Church.

THE word [CHURCH] hath,
among others, these *four* spe-
cial Significations. Being taken
for,

First, The whole Company of Gods
Elect, actually made Members of *Christ*
by vertue of an inward effectual Calling
to Faith and Godliness. This we com-
monly call the *Invisible Church*, or the
Church of Gods Elect.

Secondly, The whole Company of all
those throughout the World, who by
B their

their Doctrine and Worship do outwardly make Profession of the Name of Christ. This we call the *Universal Visible Church*; Or, the *Catholick Christian Church*.

Thirdly, Some particular, distinct, whether *National*, *Provincial* or other greater or smaller Part of the Universal. As we say; the Church of *Rome*, the Church of *Corinth*, the Church of *England*. This we call a *Particular Visible Church*.

Fourthly, By a *Synecdoche* the Bishops, Pastors, and Governours of particular Churches, lawfully authorized to represent the whole Church, whereof they are Governours, as to some special Intents. This we call a Church *Representative*.

The word [TRUTH] applyed to any Subject, is taken either *Absolute*, or *Respective*.

Absolutely a thing is true, when it hath *veritatem Entis & Essentia*; with all those Essential things, that are requisite

quisite to the bare Being and Existence of it. *Respectively*, when over and above these Essentials, it hath also such Accidental conditions and Qualities, as should make it perfect and commendably good.

A Thing may be *true* in the *first* sense, and yet not true in the *second* but *false*. As a Man may be a true Man (*animal rationale*) and yet a false Knave. A Woman a true Wife (*nupta viro*) and yet a false Quean. A Speech a true Proposition (having *Subiectum Prædicatum & Copulam*) and yet a false Lye.

A True Church, according to the *first* sense and *absolutely*, is every Church that in her Doctrine and Worship professeth the Faith of Christ, whether soundly or corruptly. But in the *second* sense and *respectively*, that only is a true Church whose Doctrine and Worship is pure, at least in a good measure, from Errors and Superstitions. So as other Churches which either maintain *Heretical* Doctrines, or prescribe *Idolatrous* Worship, may be justly called, at least wise

in comparison with this, and in this second sense, *false Churches* and not true.

A total and utter Defection from the whole Faith of Christ, in Doctrine and in Worship, destroys the very *Being* of a Church, and maketh it no Church at all. But a defection from the *purity* of Faith, doth not take away the *Being* of a Church. It remains still a true Church *Absolutely*, but only maketh it an Impure and Corrupt Church; and so far forth a false Church *Respectively*.

Corruptions in Doctrine and Worship as they are greater or lesser, so they make a Church more or less false comparatively: and as they are imposed upon Men with greater or lesser exaction, they do more or less justify; whether a Separation from, or an opposition against, such a false Church, and in some cases enforce it.

When betwixt two Churches, differing in Doctrine or Worship, Question
is

is made; Whether of them is the true Church? it must be understood not in the *first* sense and *absolutely* (for so both are true, and (*ergo*) equally true Churches, for *vero nihil verius*) but *respectively* and comparatively and in the *second* sense, *viz.* Whether of them maintains the Doctrine, together with the Worship, taught by Christ and his Apostles, in the greater measure of Purity, and freer from Error and Superstition?

[VISIBILITY] as to our purpose, imports such a state of a thing, as wherein 'tis evident and discernable more or less by sensible Marks; so as a Man may infallibly know it thereby, and say; *Here it is.* Which *Visibility* hath several Degrees; and applyed to the Church may be several ways consider'd.

First, A Thing is visible in the highest Degree, where it doth it self *ferire oculos*, as it were; and is so eminently and gloriously conspicuous, that a Man
(unless

(unless he wilfully shuts his Eyes) cannot chuse but see it. As the Sun in the Firmament is visible, when it shines forth in its greatest Lustre at Noon-Day.

Secondly, In an inferior Degree ; when 'tis discernable even outwardly, but not at the first sight, or in any glorious Splendor ; but with due and serious and intent Observation. As some Stars in an over-cast Evening to them that with a stedfast Eye look for them.

Thirdly, And in a yet lower Degree ; when its not discernable outwardly, or at all, to any but those only who more nearly partake of it. As the light of a Candle in a close private Room, is visible to those only that be in the Room.

In every of which Degrees *Visibility* applied to the Church and the Members thereof, may be consider'd in a *Four-fold* Respect.

First, Of the Men themselves.

Secondly,

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Secondly, *Of their general Profession of Christianity.*

Thirdly, *Of their particular different Tenants from other Men or Churches.*

Fourthly, *Of the truth of their particular Tenents.*

Theses.

Theses.

First, the Church in the *first* and most proper Signification, viz. the Church of Gods Elect, is wholly and altogether *Invisible*. But of this the present Question is not.

Secondly, The Universal Christian Church upon Earth hath never failed from the whole Faith, nor ever shall fail to the Worlds end, in such sort but that still in some Part or other of it, it hath been, is, and shall be visible more or less, and that *externally* in the *first* or *second* Degree of Visibilty; both in the *first* and *second* Respects.

Thirdly, Whence it follows; that understanding *Truth* in the *First* sense, there never hath wanted, doth or shall want upon Earth, a true and distinct Particular Church, in some Place or other

ther externally visible, more or less in the Degrees and Respects above specified.

Fourthly, Every *Particular* visible Church may fail, not only from the *Purity* of Faith, but also from the whole Faith it self; and so may cease to be a true Christian Church, even so much as in the *First* Sense; and may become no Church.

Fifthly, The *Universal* Christian Church (consisting of all *Particular* visible Churches together and at once) may by the prevailing of Heresy and Idolatry, be brought to such a general Defection in the outward Face of it, though not from the whole Faith, yet from the *Purity* of Faith both in Doctrine and Worship, that for a long time together there may not be found upon Earth (taking *Church* in the *second* Sense) any true *Particular* Church visibly distinct from the rest, by their outward Freedom from the common Corruptions; so much as in the *second* much less

in the *first* Degree of Visibility; either in the *third* or *fourth* Respects. And this is that Part of the Church especially under *Antichrist*.

Sixthly, That even in the Times of the greatest and most general Defection, there have been always particular Men (and those eminent either for Number, Place, Learning or Godliness) who though living in the midst of Corrupt Churches, and in the Communion and visible Profession thereof, have yet according to the measure of their Grace and Knowledge, and the exigence of Times and Occasions, either

First, Openly resisted the Errors, Superstitions and Corruptions of their Times; Or *secondly*, Noted the Corruptions as they grew and complained of them, and desired Reformation; Or *thirdly*, In private dissented from them in the Explication of the most dangerous Doctrines, and kept themselves free from the foulest Corruptions, though carried with the Stream of the common Apostacy

postacy to embrace the rest. Whereof we are to presume they repented either, *Explicitely*, if God gave them to see their Errors; or at least *wise Implicitely*, in the Mass of their ignorant and unknown Sins.

Seventhly, Although such particular Men were not always so locally and generally seperated from the rest, as to make a visible distinct particular Church by themselves in the *first Degree of Visibibility*; yet in these Men did the Succession of the true Church (taking it comparatively and in the *second Sense*) especially consist, and the ~~Visibibility of~~ *it* continue in the Time of universal Defection. In which Men the true Church continues visible always, and perpetually, without interruption; ~~and that ever in the~~ *fourth* Respect, *viz.* in regard of the acknowledged Truth of their Doctrine; in the *third Degree of Visibibility viz.* in an inward Estate and to themselves; and sometimes also (though perhaps not al-

ways) visible externally, and to their very Enemies more or less, in the *second* Degree of Visibility, and in the *Three* first Respects.

Concerning

Concerning the
CHURCH of ROME.

THE Church of *Rome* or *Roman* Church is taken in a *Threesfold* Latitude.

First, Respectively to the *Place*; for that Church which is in the *City*, or *Territory*, or *Diocels* of *Rome*. As we say the Church of *Geneva*, or the Church of *Venice*. And so *St. Paul* wrote an *Epistle* to the Church of *Rome*, as he did to the Churches of *Corinth*, *Ephesus* and other particular *Cities*.

Secondly, Respectively to the *State* of the *Empire*, for the whole *Latine* or *Western* Churches, as they are distinguished from the *Greek* and *Eastern* Churches,

Churches, and from the *African* and *Southern* Churches. Because by reason of the *Empire*, these Churches had a nearer Communion among themselves then with other Churches; and acknowledg the *Bishop* of *Rome* as *primæ sedis Episcopum*; or the *Patriarch* of the *West*; as other *Bishops* were of the *Greek*, *Asian*, and *African* Churches.

Thirdly, Respectively to the *Faith*; for all particular Churches *aggregatim*, that acknowledg Subjection to the present See of *Rome*; and entirely Communicate with that Church in the present Doctrine and Worship of it; and namely, and especially, as to our purpose, as 'tis comprised in the Council of *Trent*.

In which last Sense taking the Church of *Rome*, it may be consider'd either;

First, *Materialiter*, as 'tis a Church professing the Faith of *Christ*; as we also do in the common Points of Agreement.

Secondly,

— Secondly, *Formaliter* and in regard of that we call Popery viz. the Point of Difference, whether concerning the Doctrine or **Worship**; wherein we charge her to have added to the substance of Faith her own Inventions.

Thirdly, *Conjunctim pro toto aggregato*, taking both together. As in any unsound Body; we may consider the Body by it self; the Disease by it self; and the Body and the Disease both together, as they make a Diseased Body.

Theses.

Theses.

F*irst*, the Church of *Rome* (which of the *Three* ways soever taken) is not the *Universal* Christian Church, but only a Part thereof, or a *Particular* Church, or Churches.

Secondly, The Church of *Rome* ever since the first Plantation of it hath continued a true Church, taking Truth in the *first* Sense; and considering the Church of *Rome* *Materially* as it is a Church. But so hath the Church of *England* also, and many other Churches.

Thirdly, The Church of *Rome* hath no special Promise or Privilege, above other Particular Churches, of Immunity from falling; either from the Purity of Faith, or the whole Faith it self.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Church of *Rome* which way soever taken, hath long since failed from the Purity of Faith, both in the Doctrine and Worship of it. And so consider'd *formally*, in regard of those Points which are properly of *Poper*y, is become a *False* and Corrupt Church; and is indeed an *Antichristian* Synagogue, and not a true Christian Church; Taking Truth in the *second* Sense.

Fifthly, The Doctrinal Errors of the Church of *Rome*, do not *directly* and immediately overthrow the Foundation of Faith, as the Heresy of the *Arrian* Churches did, but *mediately* and by necessary Consequence they do. As in the Points of *Merits*, *Mass*, *Transubstantiation*, &c.

Sixthly, The bare Teaching, even *ex Cathedrâ*, of the Doctrinal Errors of the Church of *Rome* (in as much as they do not overthrow the Foundation, but *ex consequenti* and indirectly) is not enough of it self alone to enforce

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or justify an outward Separation from her ; But the imposing these Errors upon the Consciences of Men, to be believed as of necessity, is Damnable. And doth not only justify a Separation already made, but also bindeth *sub Mortali* all true Christians to such a Separation.

Seventhly, The Worship required and performed in the Church of Rome, is in most Things Superstitious ; and in some lately Idolatrous : and such as wherein a good Christian cannot lawfully Communicate with her.

So as if there were nothing else, yet her Idolatry were enough to justify and enforce such a Separation.

Concerning

Concerning

Protestant CHURCHES.

BY the *Protestant* Churches we understand those visible Particular Churches, which having by an external Separation freed themselves from the Tyranny and Idolatry of Popery, have more or less *reformed* the Doctrine and Worship from *Popish* Corruptions, and restored them more or less to the Ancient and *Primitive* Purity.

Now such Churches may be consider'd either *Materially* or *Formally*.

First, *Materially*. When we consider those Churches, to whom it happens thus to be Reformed, barely and precisely as

Local and *Particular* visible Churches; without respect had to their present *Reformed*, or former *Corrupt* Estate, or to the Substance of their Faith. As when we say, The Church of *England*, The Church of *Denmark*. The Church of *Saxony*, &c.

Secondly, *Formally*. The *Protestant* Churches may again be consider'd two ways, in respect of a *Two-fold* Form.

First, An outward and *accidental* Form. *Secondly*, An inward and, as it were, *essential* Form.

The inward Form ever giveth *Esse*, but the outward often giveth *Nomen*. The *outward* Form is barely the State of Reformation, which supposeth another former Estate of Deformity or Corruption; out of which respect, they have the Name and Title of *Protestant* and *Reformed* Churches. But the *inward* Form is the Substance of their Faith thus reformed, in their Doctrine and Worship, from the Corruptions wherewith Popery had infected it.

Which

Which Substance of Faith in the Protestant Churches, may be consider'd differently in the *Positive* Points of their Faith and in the *Negative*. The *Positive* Points, or *Affirmative* Articles of our Christian Faith, are they which make us true Christian Churches. For in our *Positive* we teach the ancient Faith of Christ, and his Apostles, and the Primitive Church. And in our *Negative*, we reject the Innovations and Corruptions of latter Times.

TO

To the QUESTION then,

*Where Our CHURCH was
before Luther?*

I Answer;

F*irst*, Taking our Protestant Churches *Materially*, as namely the Church of *England*, it was where it is, viz. in *England*. Where by the great Mercy of God, it hath continued a visible Christian Church from the first Plantation of it, by *Apostles*, or Apostolical Men, without Interruption (though not always without Error and Corruption) unto this Day. And herein it need not yield to the very Church of *Rome* it self; or to any other Church under Heaven.

Secondly,

Secondly, Taking the Protestant Church *Formally*, in respect of the Substance of Faith, the Professors of it have been in some Degree or other visible, as well before *Luther* as since. But yet differently in the *Affirmatives* and in the *Negatives* of our Faith.

Thirdly, Taking the Protestant Church *Formally*, in respect of the outward Form, *viz.* as under the State of Reformation; we will freely confess; There was no such Reformed or Protestant Church before *Luther* as now there is. For a Church could not be said to be *Reformed* till it was *Deformed*. No more than a Man can be said to be stript of a Motly Coat, before he had it on.

Fourthly, The Protestant Church for Substance of Faith in the *Affirmative* Doctrine, hath continued *visibly* from Christ and his Apostles without Interruption, as well before as since *Luther*; according to the Tenor of our *Second*
and

and *Third Theses*. In which our Adversaries and we agree; witness the Articles of our Church.

Fifthly, The Substance of Faith, as concerning the Worship, Maintain'd and Practis'd in the Protestant Church of *England*, hath continued Visible in like manner in all Ages; as well before as since *Luther*. Witness our *Service-Book*; Wherein our Adversaries themselves are not able to except against any thing contained. Only they complain of some Defects. But that belongs not to the *Affirmatives*, but to the *Negatives* of our Faith.

Sixthly, The *Negative* Tenets of our Protestant Church, wherein she Renounceth the Errors and Idolatries of the *Romish* (for so much as they are *Negatives*) are not capable of a *visible* Profession, in such Sort as *Affirmatives* are. Yet thus far our Church was *visible* in respect of these *Negatives* before

fore *Luther*, viz. In the Primitive Times, for the first Six *Hundred Years* especially, and some other Ages after also, all Orthodoxal Particular Churches were visible Professors of our Faith. In as much as in their *Writings*, where we were *Affirmative*, they were Affirmative also. Where we are *Negative*, they are either *Negative* or *Doubtful*, or *Divided*, or *Silent*. Which very Silence is enough to make them *ours* as to this Intent. For who can expect they should purposely confute those Errors, which were (many of them) not so much as thought on in their Times.

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Seventhly,

Seventhly, In succeeding Times, when Errors and Superstitions began to grow to some Head (through the Factions of Princes, the Pride of the Clergy, and the common Ignorance of the Times.) As namely, about the Year *Nine Hundred*, and thenceforth till the Times of *Luther*, our Protestant Church was not visibly distinct from the corrupt *Romish* (according to the Tenor of our *Fifth Thesis*) but mingled with it. Yet it had thus far forth visible Professors; That there were in every Age before *Luther*, some whose Names and Opinions, have been by God's good Providence preserved in Histories and Records (notwithstanding the indirect Endeavors of the Adversaries to root out the Memory of them) who complained of the Corruptions, and contradicted the Doctrines and Abuses of *Popery*, some in one Point, and some in another; some in most of all those Points where-
in

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in we now dissent ; and that in such
Degrees and Respects of Visibility, as
we have declared in our *Sixth* and
Seventh Theses.

F I N I S.
